

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 972

By Gant

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of James Opal Gray of
Guys.

WHEREAS, we were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of James Opal Gray, a dedicated public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, born on September 20, 1940, in Selmer, Mr. Gray was the son of Thomas Opal and Audrey Lee McCoy Gray; he graduated from Ramer High School in 1958 and earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the School of Business and Industry at Mississippi State University; and

WHEREAS, prior to being elected as sheriff, Mr. Gray worked for Tennessee River Pulp and Paper for six years; and

WHEREAS, the first sheriff in McNairy County to be elected to a four-year term, Mr. Gray served three terms as sheriff from 1974 to 1982; and

WHEREAS, he evinced his religious faith as a member of both Gravel Hill Baptist Church and First Baptist Church in Selmer; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gray was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, he was united in marriage with Margaret Joyce Gilmore Gray on December 21, 1971, and shared fifty years of loving companionship with her; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his wife, he leaves to cherish his memory his two daughters, Alonda (Charles) Sweat and Alecia (Dewayne) Mathis; three granddaughters, Lauren (Cody) Seiber, Brandy (Jeff) Siffret, and Ashley Sweat; and two step-grandsons, Hunter Mathis and Jesse Mathis; and

WHEREAS, he is further survived by his great-grandchildren, Brayden Kilzer and Brooklyn Kilzer; sister-in-law, Joann Clark Gilmore; niece and nephew, Mary Elizabeth (Mike) McCord and Gary (Kim) Gilmore; great-niece, Kendra Gilmore; and cousins, Brenda Hopkins (Kenneth) Lancaster and Sylvia Hopkins (Dave) Ruth; and

WHEREAS, he was preceded in death by his parents; parents-in-law, Homer and Mary Wade Gilmore; aunt, Elsie McCoy; uncle, Sexton McCoy; brothers-in-law, Homer Lee Gilmore and James E. Gilmore; and sister-in-law, Mary Gilmore; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Gray leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we should remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of James Opal Gray, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mr. Gray.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.